

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8968

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 09714

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PASS LABOR FOR METCALF; COMMERCE FOR GEORGE E. HALL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, OECD
SUBJECT: TWELFTH MEETING - WORKING PARTY ON SOCIAL
INDICATORS, MANPOWER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MARCH 13-16

SUMMARY:

THE WORKING PARTY FAILED TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO RE-
COMMEND THAT (A) PHASE II WORK ON INDICATORS BE EXTENDED
TO 1985; OR (B) THAT PHASE III OF THE WORK PROGRAM
BE IMPLEMENTED (THAT IS, THAT MEMBER COUNTRIES BE ASKED-
NOT REQUIRED- TO COLLECT STATISTICS TO BETTER MEASURE
THE INDICATORS SO FAR IDENTIFIED). RATHER THESE QUES-
TIONS WERE REFERRED TO THE FULL COMMITTEE OF MANPOWER
AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS TOGETHER WITH A REQUEST THAT THE

SECRETARIAT INFORM MSAC OF THE OECD RESOURCES THAT WOULD
BE REQUIRED TO CARRY ON THESE ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND:

THE OECD SOCIAL INDICATORS PROGRAM HAS BEEN IN EXISTEN-
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CE SEVEN YEARS. THE FIRST PHASE OF ITS WORK WAS TO DE-
VELOP A SET OF SOCIAL CONCERNS FOR WHICH INDICATORS
COULD BE DEVELOPED. PHASE I IS COMPLETED. PHASE II
WHICH WAS TO DEVELOP THE SPECIFIC STATISTICALLY DEFINED
INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE CONCERNS SET OUT IN THE PRE-
CEDING PHASE, HAS ADVANCED TO THE POINT WHERE A SET OF
WORKING INDICATORS SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY 1980.

THE PURPOSES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING WERE:

(1) TO REVIEW THE PROGRESS IN PHASE II AND TO DECIDE WHETHER A FULL SET OF INDICATORS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED OR WHETHER THE ACTIVITY SHOULD BE TERMINATED WITH THE PRESENT WORKING LIST;

(2) TO DETERMINE IF A PHASE III SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED TO COLLECT THE STATISTICS NEEDED FOR APPLICATION OF THE INDICATORS DEVELOPED IN PHASE II AND TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR THE POLICY USE OF THESE INDICATORS. IN FACT, NEITHER OF THESE PURPOSES WERE ACCOMPLISHED. BOTH QUESTIONS WERE REFERRED TO THE FULL COMMITTEE (MSAC), WITH A REQUEST THAT THE SECRETARIAT PROVIDE MSAC WITH ESTIMATES OF OECD RESOURCES THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR THESE ACTIVITIES.

1. PROGRESS REPORT ON PHASE II (MAS/WP1(78)3)

THE WORKING PARTY REVIEWED THE 1977 DRAFT PROGRESS REPORT PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT. A REVISED VERSION BASED ON THE DISCUSSION WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE MANPOWER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING FOR SUBSEQUENT TRANSMITTAL TO THE COUNCIL IN JUNE. DURING THE DISCUSSION SEVERAL DELEGATIONS WHILE AGREEING THAT MOST OF THE COMMON DEVELOPMENT'S EFFORTS (CDE'S) ARE MOVING FORWARD SATISFACTORILY, NOTED THAT SOME PROBLEMS REMAIN REGARDING THE PERFORMANCE OF MEMBER

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COUNTRIES AND THE SECRETARIAT IN A NUMBER OF CDE'S. (THESE CRITICISMS WERE NOT DIRECTED TOWARD THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS STAFF.) COMMENT: NEITHER PROBLEMS ARE CAUSE FOR SERIOUS U.S. CONCERN IN U.S. DEL'S VIEW. HOWEVER, THERE WAS GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THE EFFORT TO-DATE HAS ONLY BEEN ABLE TO SPECIFY THOSE INDICATORS OF HIGH PRIORITY INTEREST WHICH APPEAR TO BE MEASURABLE WITH THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ART AND NOTED THAT THE WORKING LIST COULD BE COMPLETELY SPECIFIED BY 1980. CONSEQUENTLY IF THE FULL LIST OF INDICATORS IS TO BE DEVELOPED THE CURRENT EFFORT WOULD HAVE TO BE EXTENDED TO 1985 AND WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL SECRETARIAT RESOURCES IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT SIMULTANEOUSLY THE PROPOSED PHASE III OF THE PROGRAM.

2. PHASE III - DRAFT REPORT BY THE SECRETARIAT

(MAS/WP1(78)1)

THE WORKING PARTY MAIN AGENDA ITEM WAS CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT ON A POSSIBLE PHASE III PREPARED BY THE SECRETARIAT ON BEHALF OF A SPECIAL GROUP. THE WP FULLY SUPPORTED THE GENERAL NOTION THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF THE INDICATORS DEVELOPED IN PHASE II WERE IMPLEMENTED IN

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THE MEMBER COUNTRIES. (NOTE: "BY IMPLEMENTATION IS UNDERSTOOD THE PROGRESSIVE REFINEMENT AND EXTENSION OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS, AS NECESSARY, TO GENERATE DATA AGREED BY DEFINITIONS OF SOCIAL INDICATORS".) HOWEVER, THE GROUP DID NOT AGREE THAT A DRAFT RECOMMENDATION APPENDED TO THE REPORT BE SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL AT THE PRESENT TIME. A MAJORITY OF DELEGATIONS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE APPEARANCE THAT THE RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE CONSIDERED BINDING ON THE MEMBER COUNTRIES. U.S. DEL WHO INDICATED STRONG CONCERN ON SUCH AN ACTION WAS SUPPORTED BY THE U.K. AND SPAIN. (THE U.K. POSITION THROUGHOUT THE MEETING TENDED TO SUPPORT MINIMAL COMMITMENTS ON THE PART OF MEMBER COUNTRIES). ANOTHER ISSUE WAS THE LACK OF SPECIFICITY ABOUT THE RESOURCES WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO UNDERTAKE PHASE III, AND TO EXTEND PHASE II. THE U.S. DELEGATION AGAIN STRESSED THE NEED FOR SUCH INFORMATION AND WAS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE U.K. AND GERMANY. THE SECRETARIAT (DYMOND) RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO INCLUDE AT LEAST SOME APPROXIMATION OF RESOURCE NEEDS IN THE REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP. THIS REPORT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE MANPOWER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING, PRIOR TO ITS

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SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL IN JUNE.

3. THE WORKING GROUP REELECTED THE OUTGOING BUREAU (CHAIRMAN, N. PREFONTAINE, CANADA; VICE CHAIRMAN, TAPIO LEPPONEN, FINLAND). IT REJECTED A SECRETARIAT PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERIM MEETING AND SCHEDULED ITS NEXT MEETING IN APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR.

4. GEORGE HALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF FEDERAL STATISTICAL POLICY AND STANDARDS, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, LED THE U.S. DELEGATION.
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